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SUBJECT: NEW DUTCH MFA SECTION: TERRORISM AND NEW THREATS

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1. (SBU) The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has created a "Terrorism and New Threats" unit within the Department of Political Affairs. According to Fred Olthof, the newly-designated head of the unit, the reorganization is intended to consolidate into one office several counter-terrorism and transnational crime portfolios (including trafficking-in-persons and international organized crime) previously spread throughout the MFA. Olthof told emboffs on September 9 that the new section has six full-time employees, most with experience in counter-terrorism. He said the unit's prime purpose will be to act as a "knowledge-broker" to ensure that information related to terrorism and international crime is properly shared within the MFA and between the MFA and other institutions in the Netherlands and abroad.

2. (SBU) Olthof made clear that he and his unit were still in the process of defining their responsibilities and focus. As the MFA is not an intelligence or law enforcement organization, he expected to work mainly on promoting international political cooperation in combating terrorism and transnational crime. Improving counter-terrorist cooperation within the EU and between the EU and others would be a high priority. For example, Olthof observed that the Dutch experience with North African immigrants would be useful in developing projects with Morocco and Algeria focusing on reducing radicalization and recruitment.

3. (SBU) Emboffs provided a copy of the 2004 Country Reports on Terrorism to Olthof and briefed generally on the organization and responsibilities of S/CT. Olthof was not familiar with S/CT and expressed interest in learning more about how the State Department handled counter-terrorism and transnational crime.

BLAKEMAN